workmen, who prepare the designs in the establishment of the manufacturer, who know merely how to draw.

In a picture or a statue, illusion is never the object of the true artist. However closely he may have studied the varying features of nature,—however assiduously he may have gathered from the beauties of the landscape, or the graces of the human form divine, nothing is further from his expectation, than that he shall be able to cheat the observer into a belief, that the work is *not* a work of art. He does not even claim praise for his fidelity in producing a copy of nature; that would be a lower rank of art than he aspires to. As it is well said, nature does not afford to him the matter for *transcripts*, but for *lessons*; thence he draws his principles and his materials, but gives to both a new development. His art is

"Nature still, but nature methodized."

* * * *

"Something whose truth convinced at sight we find,
That gives us back the image of our mind,"

something which increases in us our love of nature, and unfolds beauties till then unseen, and yet in every line has evidence of nature's greater work, the mind which produced that work of art. True to nature, art must still pervade the whole, though not the art of manipulation; for that it was which the old author said it was the highest art to conceal. Indeed, it has even been considered, that a literal and minute observance of nature is a positive demerit, reminding us of the absence of that which cannot be attained in a work of art. Whatever skill there may be in the hand of the artist, life and animation will still be wanting; the even surface of the canvas, and the materials of his art will alone tell against him. Therefore, he wisely eschews an attempt which, if successful, would command only a moderate quality of praise, and substitutes the resources of art for those which are denied. The surface, in this case, is merely the convenient vehicle, a thing which has no essential connection with art, except as a mechanical aid. The object was to produce a picture, but not to cheat the eye.

In interior decoration, the architectural principle must be every where observed; it must never be forgotten that the wall, for example, of a room is a reality, and that where no difference of surface has been produced by relief, none can be attempted satisfactorily by colour or shadowing. Columns, niches, pannels, or sculpture, imitated by painting on the wall, will always be unsatisfactory, except, perhaps, they are far removed from the eye, and inaccessible to close examination. If otherwise, they may display the perfection of manipulation, but will never do more than remind the observer of a deficiency which they seem intended to supply. It is not the art of the scene-painter that is required here. It will never for a moment be forgotten by the observer, and therefore must not by the architect, that the wall is a flat surface, which may be enriched by form and colour, but on which it were better not to attempt to supply the want of relief. Representations in detail, as in arabesques, pictures painted in compartments of framed, are all at his disposal, for these the true aim of art excludes from the adverse argument. Representations of fruit, and flowers, and animals, if well executed, and treated on the principle of the picture, not as substitutes for relief, are perfectly admissible. In colour, even, strong contrasts will require to be used with caution. The borders of pictures must always stop short of the angles of the room: as Mr. Eastlake recommends, "the real wall is in short never to be lost sight of." The decoration must be adapted to the architecture, and appear to grow out of it, not as in many of the mural decorations of the old painters, where architecture seems to have been considered as an antagonist. The rooms of old Montague House, the late British Museum, beautiful as they may have been in some respects, were instances of the mistakes to which we have alluded. A balustrade and cornice painted upon the cove of a ceiling, or a figure skilfully foreshortened, upon the compartment of a groined roof, may excite our wonder as achievements in perspective, yet are lamentable evidences of mis-applied labour, such as could not have occurred where the *architect* directed the completion of the work, upon the principles of his art, and where the painter worked in unison with him. Even pictures which contain figures the size of life, are inadmissible, where the living figure must so often stand near them. With the array of argument against us, in the grand works of the Italian schools, we should perhaps hesitate to contend against the use of the full-sized figure in all pictures; but where the object is not to exhibit some one or two works, but to decorate an apartment, with some degree of variety in details, we are certain that the objects are best met by figures, considerably beneath the natural size. With all the antipathy of some historical painters to what is called "tea-board size," it should always be recollected, that not only is the patronage for large works limited to a very small amount, but that their production itself interferes very greatly with the space, which might be otherwise filled, and probably with greater benefit to art. The bent of our argument, as regards the decoration of rooms, however, is, that success will generally follow the treatment of the pictorial part, as accessory to mere form and colour, but will be more difficult where paintings occupy a large space; they are then better disposed in galleries, arranged expressly for the purpose; but works of art, if we would derive all the pleasure which they are capable of affording, must be around us, in the library or the drawing-room.

If sincerity of treatment be necessary in the decorations of walls, it is still more so in those of floors. Pavements or carpets, which, either by shade or contrasts of colour, destroy the appearance of the even surface, are great mistakes in art. A little consideration for this principle would prevent those errors in design, which are continually made. We may be told, that we should be denied the use of groups of flowers in carpets, and so lose one of those resources, which possibly is capable of very beautiful application. Our satisfaction with the most open attempt at imitation would be greater, could it only be made a little more true to reality. There is no department of art, which so much needs attention as that of design for carpets; it is not only that they display an ignorance of principles, but they are vile in drawing and combinations of colour.

If the imitation of forms in relief be tolerable anywhere, it must be in ceilings, which may be so far removed from the eye, that the actual even surface may not be always apparent. But even here, every shifting of the sun may display the deception; and a shadow which happens to be on the same side of a moulding as the light, will be an occurrence not easily reconcileable with rules, either of nature or art. To display a fine painting upon a ceiling, where it cannot be looked at without pain, and often cannot be seen entirely from any one point, is a mistake which modern art will seldom fall into. It would hardly be conceived, that the finest works in Italy are thrown away upon the vaults and ceilings, and examples are familiar in England,

"Where sprawl the saints of Verrio and Laguerre,
Or gilded clouds in fair expansion lie,
And bring all Paradise before your eye."

Amongst the different manufactured articles intended for interior decoration, paper-hangings are certainly the most important. They are used in every part of a house, are produced in every variety, and can be obtained at prices ranging from a very low rate; and yet it is this manufacture which most of all requires the application of correct principles of design. If the imitation of relief be undesirable in painted decorations, it is doubly so in paper-hangings, which are hung where the light of the apartment is generally in direct contradiction to the represented shadow, and which have not usually the minute finish, which could entitle them to criticism as works of art. The mechanical regularity, also, which most of them, from the limits of the manufacture, display, as well as their tasteless forms and manner of execution, quite debar them from the rank of average merit, even as works of imitation. In some of the designs lately produced, some of these defects are obviated by printing separate pieces for borders, centres, and groundwork, so that the architect is able to make such combinations, as he may deem best in the circumstances of the case. Much, however, has yet to be accomplished in the improvement of this branch of art, and the erroneous notion that shadowing, is indispensable cannot be too soon eradicated. We have endeavoured to shew that form and colour are alone desirable.—In that class of the present designs for paper-hangings, in which the representation of objects is attempted, we have to contend against the influence of French taste, which is at this time more apparent in this article of manufacture, than probably in any other. We pass over the large number of such subjects as landscapes and battles, meant to cover the whole of an apartment, subjects much in fashion in tea-gardens, and bar-parlours, and look at another description of the scenic manner of treatment, against which we have endeavoured to argue. Here, statues, niches, and other objects are represented, relieved from the ground by shadow, and with such skill, that at a sufficient distance they might almost be taken for the objects, which they represent. But, like similar parts of the scenes of the theatre, a near approach shows that they are not realities, which they profess to be; whilst their treatment, and indeed alone that very claim which they prefer, prevents their successful resistance of the ordeal of those tests, which, it may now be inferred, must be applied ere they can rank as works of art. Many of these designs are remarkable for invention and fancy, and show that those who invented them, would be quite capable of producing satisfactory works, were their attention directed to sound principles.

We have already printed some remarks on the treatment of colour,* and we need only allude here, to the importance of considering the principles of the combinations of colours, in every part of the furniture and decoration. The purpose of the apartment must also be considered, and the decorations must accord with the frame of mind, which is likely to be induced by such use of the apartment. The effect of much positive colour can hardly fail to be a diminution of the beauty of form, and a decrease in the effect of the accessories of any entertainment, in which we may include the attire of the guests. Indeed, it may be questioned, whether the present desire for positive colour alone, is not the result of the antiquarian taste of the day, which has discovered its constant use in the architecture of the middle ages, where it had often a symbolic meaning. If gilding and positive colours be employed to the exclusion of others, we miss the happy effects which would be at our disposal, from their occasional introduction in composition—a method more in accordance with the example of Nature, ever a sound counsellor in every walk of art.

The more the art of interior decoration becomes identified with architecture, the more scope will there be for its exercise, accompanying sound construction and elegance of effect, with integrity of material and true economy. The architecture of the exterior will not longer employ the deceptive and the perishable material, in place of the truthful and the enduring, and the art of internal decoration will find its best materials in those which Nature has perfected.

AWARDS OF OFFICIAL REFEREES.

RUINOUS BUILDINGS.

The surveyor to the western district of the city of London, having in pursuance of the authority and direction of the official referees, surveyed the premises No. 15, Field-lane, Holborn, and certified "that the said premises are ruinous, and that passengers are endangered thereby, and that it is necessary that the same be forthwith pulled down, repaired, or otherwise secured, as shall from time to time be requisite,—"

Mr. Charles Pearson, for the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of the City of London, appealed against the certificate on the ground, that "by the said certificate it is not certified whether the whole of the premises mentioned therein, or any, and what part thereof requires to be taken down, or whether the same, or any, and what part thereof requires to be repaired, or whether the same or any, and what part thereof requires to be otherwise secured."

The referees' award was, "that the certificate of the district surveyor made under the

* "Colour in Internal Decoration: questions affecting its Treatment." Vide page 14, *ante*.

For a comprehensive guide on OCR and PDF Compression visit ThePaperlessOffice.org